Dear Dick, 6/4/91

Thanks for your call and the interest it reflects and for the good advice on the Stone book. I've thought about that since. I agree with all of what you said. You know the field and those in it.

There is an aspect we did not discuss, the sales potential of the book. While there are many considerations all of which cannot be anticipated, including when it could be submitted and when it could appear, I am confident that there is a very large market for the book for three reasons that came to mind. Perhaps there are more that with further thought I'd see: Stone's fame; scandal and the movie; and JFK.

JFK assassination books have been selling exceptionally well. I do not know how much effort your friends at Carroll & Graf made with a bad book, Crossfire, but their hardback did well enough for them to add an index when they did it as a paperback.

Before that, self-published High Treason must have sold more than 100,000 before Berkeley did it as a paperback. I know the man who did it and he was selling to the chains in exceptionally large lots. His promotional and advertising capabilities were slight but the stores wanted the book and most reordered. It has the appearance of a solid work but it is seriously flawed. I am not aware of any important reviews of either but High Treason made the Times best-seller list the week it was available in New York.

As I told you, my books, until a slacking of sales for the past month or so, were selling better than for years and they are all old books. I attribute this increase to increased interest in the subject and to a degree by inclusion of my address in it. The latter reflects subject-matter interest by book-buyers. A constant, by the way.

Stone is already a legend and there is great interest in him. There is always a great interest in anything about movies and movie people. Any book on Stone will sell. The scandal he has made and his irresponsibility and dishonesty in his self-defense have already made significant news and reached many people. My reading on him and what he is doing is that he is desparate. There is a reasonable prospect that this will drive him to what would enhance book sales. You'll get an idea from my unedited letter to him enclosed. I believe that were the book to appear before the movie some of the stars in it, like Ed Asner, would be unhappy enough to try to separate themselves from it. Anything like that would enhance sales, I think greatly. I believe that if I had an address for him and sent him copies of the two Outlook treatments and of my letter to him Asner would feel he had been put upon by Stone and would consider withdrawing from the movie. This is, of course, no more than an opinion but it is my ~~xxxxxxxx~~ experience that people, including some in movies, have a deep concern about misrepresentations and dishonesties relation to the JFK assassination.

Were the book to appear before the movie Stone would be hollering enough to make it a best-seller and were it to get the minimum attention the material warrants he'd have

little choice. While I have no reason to believe that appearance by then is probable, an imaginative publisher could see this and the coinciding Christmas market and could see the added costs and problems of speeding publication up as a better than average risk.

Suppose it also develops that in giving Warners the script he also gave them personal assurances about fidelity to fact and they get unhappy.

There are, I think, many factors that cannot all be anticipated and many or most of which may not come to pass that I believe, on balance, an intelligent publisher could find justification for extra costs.

The script will not be used in the book. Stone himself has made more than enough public domain. I have an abundance on Garrison, enough in and of itself to justify and make a book.

That there will not be any basis for a lawsuit does not mean that one won't be filed. Stone might be desparate or crazy enough to do that. He should by now, and if not by now before very long, be aware that taking his reputation to court is the certain way to ruin what he allows to remain of it.

I don't think he is crazy. I think that when he gets to where he cannot lie and misrepresent himself past accurate and justified criticism he'll try to pass the blame onto those he trusted and claim that despite any inaccuracies the movie suggests a reasonable and correct conclusion and hope that the scandal pulls people in. He has started calling it "entertainment."

A frivolous lawsuit, if I understand what his lawyers could tell him, could entice a countersuit that could be costly and hurt him even more.

Garrison id a mark like you can't begin to imagine. Stone latched himself to Garrison so most of the book should and would be on Garrison.

Now if after he got my letter, not that anyone with any degree of responsibility would have delayed that long with any knowledge at all about his subject matter, he had used the records I obtained from the FBI and CIA and he'd have known immediately, as I hint to him, that he had bedded with a viper. Stone would not have had to review the New Orleans and other clippings reporting what Garrison said (blandly ignoring that he had just said the opposite) because the FBI sent clippings to HQ, often retyping them cleanly. The CIA even compared what Garrison told Playboy with what he told Der Spiegel. This it to say that if Stone had had any concern for fidelty and integrity he would have checked Garrison out. The book could and would say what he'd have learned. What would have impelled an honest man not to touch the book. (To which in the past I referred as "Alice in Blunderland"). A possible subtitle for the Garrisonia?

Lardner and I have also been talking about and he is interested in a section of "new evidence," what Garrison could have done and either failed to or refused to. I have an abundance on this. And with word of it out it alone will sell many books.

Only I won't be able to talk to any publisher or show him things.

Thanks again and I hope what I can see has a chance to come to pass. It then would!

Best Harold